

THE URBAN DISTRICT OF
SKELMERSDALE



Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the year

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SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1961

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Chairman of the Health Committee: J. T. LATHAM

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R. GREGSON

Medical Officer of Health:

J. GORDON HAILWOOD, M.D., CH.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
(Part-time)

(Divisional Medical Officer, Lancashire County Council)

Public Health Inspector:

ALBERT LAVELLE, A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H., CERT.I.HSG.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH COMMITTEE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the health of Skelmersdale during 1961.

The general health has remained good throughout the year. The only incidence of infectious diseases has been a small outbreak of measles during May and June when some forty cases were notified.

The birth rate was 15.5 per 1,000 population compared with 15.2 in the previous year.

The general death rate at 13.6 per 1,000 population showed a decrease compared with the figure of 15.9 in 1960. The infant mortality rate was Nil — no child under the age of twelve months died compared with three deaths (30.9 per 1,000 live births) in 1960. This year is the first since 1952 that no infant deaths have been recorded although the number of deaths have remained low in the years between. The following infant mortality table for the last fifteen years is of interest:—

Year	Deaths under 1 year	Rate per 1,000 live births
1947	11	69
1948	4	43
1949	6	53
1950	5	60
1951	6	62
1952	Nil	Nil
1953	1	11
1954	2	21
1955	2	29
1956	2	19
1957	1	13
1958	2	22
1959	3	29
1960	3	31
1961	Nil	Nil

Housing conditions continue to improve — but very slowly. Only 16 new houses were built during the year, although 20 were demolished as unfit. Much still needs to be done to rid the district of unfit property.

Finally, I would thank the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee for their interest and support during the year, and members of the staff for their ready help and co-operation at all times.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. HAILWOOD

Medical Officer of Health

July, 1962

Area of the District: 1,942 acres.

Resident Population (Registrar General's estimate at mid-1961):
6,340

Number of inhabited houses according to Rate Books at end of 1961 :
2,120

Rateable Value: £47,269.

Sum represented by a penny rate: £181

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1961

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
LIVE BIRTHS	56	42	98
Live birth rate per 1,000 population	—	—	15.5
Illegitimate live births per cent of total live births	—	—	5.1
STILL BIRTHS	1	3	4
Still birth rate per 1,000 live and still births	—	—	39.2
TOTAL LIVE AND STILL BIRTHS	57	45	102
DEATHS	38	30	68
Death rate per 1,000 population	—	—	13.6
INFANT DEATHS	—	—	—
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	—	—	—
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births legitimate	—	—	—
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births illegitimate	—	—	—
Neo-natal mortality rate per 1,000 live births (first four weeks)	—	—	—
Early neo-natal mortality rate per 1,000 live births (first week)	—	—	—
Perinatal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births (still births and deaths under 1 week combined)	—	—	39.2
Maternal deaths (including abortion)	—	—	—
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births	—	—	—

NOTES ON VITAL STATISTICS

Births

There were 98 births registered in the Urban District during the year, of which 56 were male and 42 female and including 5 illegitimate births of which 2 were male and 3 female. The adjusted birth rate per 1,000 population (mid-1961) (comparability factor 1.00) was 15.5 compared with 15.2 in 1960.

Deaths

The total number of deaths registered in the Urban District during the year was 68, of this number 38 were male and 30 female. This was a decrease of 12 on the figure for 1960. The crude death rate for the year was 10.7 per 1,000 population. The adjusted death rate (comparability factor 1.27) was 13.6 per 1,000 population compared with 15.9 in 1960.

Infant Mortality

There were no deaths during the year due to Zymotic or Epidemic diseases or deaths of infants under one year of age.

Maternal Mortality

No maternal deaths occurred in the district during the year. The maternal mortality rate per 1,000 population for England and Wales was 0.33.

CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT 1961

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	—	1
Other forms of Tuberculosis	—	—
Syphilitic Disease	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—
Meningococcal Infections	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—
Measles	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—
Cancer	3	6
Diabetes	—	—
Vascular lesions of nervous system	3	4
Heart diseases	15	11
Other Circulatory diseases	—	2
Influenza	1	1
Pneumonia	1	—
Bronchitis	3	—
Other diseases of respiratory system	2	—
Ulcer of stomach of duodenum	1	—
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	1	—
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	—
Congenital malformations	—	—
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	2	4
Motor vehicle accidents	2	—
All other accidents	3	1
Suicide	—	—
Homicide and operations of war	—	—
	—	—
TOTALS	38	30
	—	—

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICE FOR THE AREA

Laboratory Facilities

Pathological specimens of a simple nature, throat swabs, etc., are sent for examination to the E.M.S. Pathological Laboratory at the Ormskirk County Hospital. All other specimens are sent to the City Laboratories, Liverpool.

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance services are provided by the County Council under the National Health Service Act, 1946.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

A Congregational Schoolroom in Witham Road is utilised every Wednesday morning as a Child Welfare Centre and Minor Ailments Clinic, under the direction of Dr. J. Willins and Nurse Bodley of the Lancashire County Council. An Immunisation Clinic is held on the fourth Wednesday afternoon in each month at 2-15 on the same premises by Dr. Willins.

Hospitals

There are no hospitals in the town.

The Ormskirk County Hospital and the Wigan Hospitals provide ample accommodation for all patients from Skelmersdale.

Infectious cases are admitted to the New Hall Isolation Hospital, Scarisbrick.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

The township is supplied with water by the West Lancashire Water Board.

Water is pumped from two boreholes some 750 feet deep at Scarth Hill into the adjoining water tower from which it gravitates through a 7 inch main to the district. This pumping station formerly belonged to the Council who sold it to the Southport and District Water Board in 1907. The West Lancashire Water Board have become responsible for both supply and distribution. Many of the lengths of old mains have been renewed. The water supply is of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity.

Due to the Council's post-war building programme and modernisation of existing old houses, the pressure in the higher parts of the town is poor at certain periods of the week, but the position has improved since the installation of a booster pump on the 7 inch supply mains.

Sewage Disposal

The district is sewered on the partly separate system. The sewage from approximately 1,800 houses is discharged by gravity through a 24-inch outfall sewer at the Council's Berry Street Disposal Works, and that from approximately 350 houses, by a 15 inch outfall sewer at the Pennylands Works.

Sewage from a small number of houses in the Stormy Area is discharged into settling tanks at the rear of Summer Street.

The sewage at Berry Street is treated by settlement and land irrigation, and is in urgent need of modernisation.

The sewage at Pennyland is treated by sedimentation and filtration and considerable improvement has been made in the quality of the effluent.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION

Privy Middens — Nil.

Number of pail closets — 43. Number converted to W.C.'s — 5.

Number of dry ashpits (excluding middens) — Nil.

Number of moveable ashbins — 2,224.

Number of houses on water carriage system — 2,076.

Number of water closets (including schools, etc.) — 2,128.

HOUSING

Number of New Houses erected during the year:—

(i) By the Local Authority	4
(ii) By other Local Authorities	—
(iii) By other bodies or persons	12

1—Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year:—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected formally or informally for housing defect (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	553
(b) Number of inspections formal or informal made for the purpose	1502
(2) Dwelling houses unfit for human habitation and not capable at reasonable expense of being rendered fit:—	
(a) Number found during the year	18
(b) Number (or estimated number) at end of year ...	230
(3) Number of dwelling houses found during the year to be not in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation, but capable of being rendered fit	263

2—Clearance Areas (*Housing Act, 1957*).

(1)	Number of dwelling houses demolished during the year :—	
(a)	Unfit houses	20
(b)	Other houses	Nil
(2)	Number of persons displaced	18

3—Houses not included in Clearance Areas :—

(1) Houses demolished or closed during year.	No. of	
Housing Act, 1957 :—	Houses	Persons Displaced
(i) Demolished as a result of formal or informal procedure (Section 11) ...	1	—
(ii) Closed in pursuance of an undertaking given by owners under Section 11 and still in force	3	5
(iii) Parts of building closed (Section 12)	—	—

(2) Repairs during the year :—

(a) Unfit houses rendered fit and houses in which defects were remedied during the period as a result of informal action by the Local Authority under the Housing or Public Health Acts	234
(b) Public Health Acts—action after service of formal notice — houses in which defects were remedied :—	
(i) By owners	35
(ii) By Local Authority in default of owners	—
(c) Housing Act, 1936 — action after service of formal notice (Sections 9, 10, 11 and 16). Houses made fit :—	
(i) By owners	Nil
(ii) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil

(d) Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954 :—
Houses reconstructed, enlarged or improved and
Demolition Orders revoked (Section 5) ... Nil

4—*Unfit Houses in temporary use (Housing Act, 1957)*

(1) Number of houses at end of year retained for temporary accommodation and approved for grant under Section 7 ... Nil

(2) Number of separate dwellings contained in (1) above Nil

(3) Number of houses at end of year licensed for temporary occupation (Section 6) ... Nil

5—*House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959 — Improvement Grants, etc.:*

Action during the year — Applications approved ... 16

INFECTIOUS DISEASE STATISTICS

	Smallpox	Enteric Fever	Scarlet Fever	Measles	Diphtheria	Puerperal Pyrexia	Erysipelas	Whooping Cough	Pneumonia	Para-Typhoid Fever	Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Acute Poliomyelitis	Dysentery
Cases	—	—	1	42	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deaths	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The number of children who have completed a full course of Immunisation during the year ended 31st December, 1961, is as follows:—

Children between the ages 0 — 4 years 126, and children between the ages 5 — 15 21, making a total of 147.

SCARLET FEVER

*Table showing incidence and mortality from Scarlet Fever
1952-1961*

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Cases . . .	—	7	1	—	—	—	2	1	1	1
Deaths . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality during 1961

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1—5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6—10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11—15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16—20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21—25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
26—35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
36—45	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
46—55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
56—65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Over 65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
	1		—		1		—	

Dispensary and sanatorium treatment for Tuberculosis is administered by the appropriate department of the Lancashire County Council.

The following table shows the number. monthly distribution and nature of cases of Infectious Diseases coming under the notice of the Medical Officer of Health during 1961

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTALS	REMOVED TO HOSPITAL
ANTHRAX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SMALLPOX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SCARLET FEVER	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
DIPHTHERIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ENTERIC FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PARA-TYPHOID FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ACUTE PNEUMONIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PUERPERAL PYREXIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MALARIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DYSENTERY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MEASLES	1	1	—	1	22	16	1	—	—	—	—	—	42	—
WHOOPING COUGH	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ERYSIPELAS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ACUTE POLIOMYELITIS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	1	1	—	1	23	16	1	—	—	—	—	—	43	—

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1961

Notifiable Diseases	Total Cases at all ages	Under 1 Year	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED											HOSPITAL	
			YEARS											Total Deaths removed to Hospital	Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to district
			1	2	3	4	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-35	36-45	46-65	over 65		
SMALLPOX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
SCARLET FEVER ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DIPHTHERIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ENTERIC FEVER ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PARA-TYPHOID	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
FEVER	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PUERPERAL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PYREXIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ERYSIPELAS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
POLIOMYELITIS ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ACUTE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PNEUMONIA ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MEASLES	42	3	4	3	4	5	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
WHOOPIING COUGH	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
FOOD POISONING ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DYSENTERY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ANTHRAX	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
OPHTHALMIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NEONATORUM PULMONARY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TUBERCULOSIS	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
NON-PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	44	3	4	3	4	5	24	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—

Factories Acts, 1937 to 1959

1. INSPECTIONS

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notice	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	3	3	—	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	23	23	1	—
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	—	—	—	—
Total	26	26	1	—

2. DEFECTS FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which Prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness (Sect. 1)	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (Sect. 2) .	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (Sect. 4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floor (Sect. 6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences (Sect. 7)					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act	1	1	—	—	—
Total	1	1	—	—	—

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1961

As the Council's slum clearance proceeds, it will involve owner-occupiers. Before purchasing old property all prospective owners should make enquiries at the Town Hall as to whether the property is on the Council's slum clearance list since they cannot now qualify for compensation, should the house be demolished. If the house is kept *structurally* in a wind and weatherproof condition, it will not only help to prolong its life, but also assist in qualifying the owner for a well-maintained payment as distinct from compensation should the house be included in a clearance area. Where the house is part of a terrace, then the local authority will not only consider each house individually, but the terrace as a whole. It is little use an owner purchasing an old house, installing a new tiled surround living room fireplace and sink unit and renewing interior decoration and then considering that the house is fit for human habitation, if he has ignored its unsound structural condition.

It should also be borne in mind that slum clearance is a continuous process and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government request local authorities to look at the problem afresh on completion of an existing scheme.

HOUSING

(a) *Improvement*

16 applications for standard improvement grants were approved during the year.

(b) *Repairs*

Extensive repairs have been carried out to rented properties throughout the area as a result of both informal and statutory notices.

(c) *Slum Clearance*

21 houses were demolished during the year.

FOOD

(a) *Premises*

Occupiers are maintaining their premises in satisfactory condition and a refrigerator has become an essential part of their equipment.

(b) *Unsound Food*

The following articles, unfit for human consumption, have been surrendered by retailers:—

<i>Food</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Tinned Meat	43½ lbs.
Tinned Fish	½ lb.
Tinned Vegetables	1½ lbs.
Tinned Fruit	24 lbs.
Tinned Milk	2 pints

(c) *Adulteration of Food*

The following report has been submitted by the Lancashire County Council, whose Sampling Officer took the following samples for analysis by the Public Analyst:—

A total of 29 samples was obtained, consisting of 12 samples of milk (2 of which were Channel Islands milk) and 17 others comprising :—

2 Boracic Lint B.P.C.	1 Liquid paraffin
1 Glycerin B.P.	1 Cod liver oil B.P.
2 Vitamin C Tablets	5 Fruit, dried
1 Salad dressing	1 Salad cream
1 White pepper	1 Mincemeat
1 part bottle of Bulmer's cider	

I give below details of those samples upon which the County Analyst gave adverse reports :—

<u>Type of Sample</u>	<u>Result of Analysis</u>	<u>Action taken</u>
1 Mixed fruit, dried	Sultanas present in greater quantity than currants, but listed after currants in declaration of ingredients.	Packers notified
1 Formal milk	Freezing point indicated 10% extraneous water. Deficient 7.2% solids-not-fat.	Legal proceedings were instituted. Vendor fined £10; costs awarded £12 12s. 0d.
1 part bottle of Bulmer's cider	Had odour of disinfectant	Warning to bottlers

DAIRIES

There is only one dairy and this has been maintained in a satisfactory condition.

ICE CREAM

Two new retailers were registered during the year for the storage and sale of ice-cream. There are now 29 registered premises.

All retailers maintained their premises in a satisfactory condition during the year, and each have satisfactory washing facilities including a constant supply of hot water.

Six ice-cream samples were submitted for bacteriological examination and all were reported satisfactory.

RODENT CONTROL

Routine inspections for the destruction of rats and mice were carried out by the Rodent Operator. Private premises were treated free of cost and a charge made for business premises. No major infestations were discovered.

Maintenance treatments for the destruction of rats in sewers were carried out and there was no evidence of serious infestation.

Attention was also paid to the Council's Sewage Works and Refuse tips.

A close watch has also been kept on the fencing of ricks during threshing on farms in the period November—March each year.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

This service is carried out under the supervision of the Public Health Inspector. A Karrier diesel-driven 10 cubic yard freighter is used for the purpose.

Dustbins and pail closets are emptied weekly. 40 pail closets of which 3 (serving premises below sewer level) are in the built up area. All the remainder serve premises on the Council's list of sub-standard houses.

It is pleasing to note that the last privy midden has been swept away. Apart from their insanitary condition, the workmen had an unpleasant task in emptying them which should not exist in this twentieth century.

The Council's refuse tip is kept covered with inert material and receives liquid and powder tip dressings as anti-insect measures during the warm weather.

SALVAGE

Waste paper is collected and baled for sale to the paper mills to save valuable tipping space. 20 tons 9 cwts. 3 qrs. of waste paper were sold during the year, the value being £143 8s. 3d.

SHOPS

There are 104 shops on the register and 208 visits were made during the year.

Duties under the Shops Act, 1950, relating to the employment of young persons and welfare facilities were carried out on behalf of the County Council.

SCHOOLS

The school kitchens, dinner service rooms and sanitary accommodation at each of the five schools have been inspected.

The facilities at the County Secondary school are excellent and have been considerably improved at the other schools.

Defects found have been reported to the Education authority and have been rectified.

One of the schools still lacks a constant supply of hot water to the wash hand basin, a basic necessity, if young children are to understand the need for hygiene.

Two of the schools still possess the foul cement rendered urinals without means of flushing. They are a constant source of nuisance.

FACTORIES

Routine visits have been made to the factories in the district and any defects found have been remedied.

The roof of one factory was underdrawn to comply with the Thermal Insulation (Industrial Provisions) Act 1957, and to ensure satisfactory working conditions for the staff.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

A number of visits have been made to the 5 factories with boiler houses in the district. One factory boiler was converted from hand firing to mechanical firing during the year with consequent abatement of atmospheric pollution.

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

Number of dwelling houses inspected under Public Health and Housing Acts	553
Number of inspections made for above purposes	1502
Visits to factories and work places	26
Visits to food premises	128
Visits re infectious diseases	1
Visits to schools	5
Visits to licensed premises	15
Visits to shops	203
Visits to hawkers vehicles	11
Visits re rodent control	137
Number of preliminary notices served	275
Number of preliminary notices complied with	254
Number of statutory notices served	37
Number of statutory notices complied with	35
Number of nuisance orders obtained	—

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